

News and events from your local Amnesty International group

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Amnesty International - Reading Group

June 2024 update

June Meeting 8.00pm - Thursday 13th June 2024



Our June meeting will be our AGM. As well as elections for key positions, we will be hearing from all our campaign coordinators will an overview of current issues and actions.

Please join us by clicking on this link
- <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/82789559652?pwd=hQpxJaOWfEHppKy3KdMjaob2X0hF6.1>

Group News

We've been busy recently and have lots still to do this summer. Take a read of our newsletter so you can join in in person if you are local or online for many of our other actions.

Chance2Dance4Charity



We had a great time at another evening of dancing and laughter at the 6th Chance2Dance4Charity. £170 was raised for Amnesty - a big thanks to Sue for organising again!!

Update on our campaign for 2024 - Political Prisoners in Hong Kong



We were delighted to join our local Hong Kongers and other speakers to watch the film "she's in jail" about Chow Hang-tung, one of the political prisoners featured in our petition this year.

We collected 95 signatures calling for the release of Chow Hang-tung from prison in Hong Kong.



We joined with local Hong Kongers to mark the 35th Anniversary of the Tiananmen Square massacre. We watched videos, sang songs and had a minutes's silence to think about those who were murdered on that day. Again we were very grateful as our petition was promoted and we got another 200+ signatures.

- Please note, we will rarely feature Hong Kongers in our photos due to the security concerns it raises. Many choose to wear masks, glasses and hats to cover their identity. Those who go unmasked may suffer personally, for example not being able to return to Hong Kong to visit family.

Our Petition for 2024

Our petition reads as follows:-

We, the undersigned, urge you to use your power to implore the authorities in Hong Kong to release human rights lawyer and activist, Chow Hang-tung and Jimmy Lai, founder of the pro-democracy newspaper "Apple Daily" and all other political prisoners, immediately and unconditionally.

You can download a copy of the petition here - [Petition](#)

Please sign and share it widely.

We will be handing it in to 10 Downing Street in the Autumn, so we need as many signatures as possible!

"Surviving Evin" - An exhibition by Anoosheh Anoori and Amnesty International



So many of you will remember all our campaigning for Anoosheh, for him and Nazanin Zaghari-Ratcliffe to be released from the notorious Evin Prison in Iran.

Two of our group members had the honour of meeting **Anoosheh Ashoori** at an exhibition he created with Amnesty International this week. The exhibition was called **Surviving Evin**, referring to the 4 years, 7 months he spent in prison in Iran - an innocent man incarcerated as a result of British/Iranian issues entirely beyond his control.

We were struck by the warmth & welcome of Anoosheh and his daughter, Erika, both so keen to describe his experience & achievements since. Anoosheh told us he had 3 ambitions in prison - to put on this exhibition so people would understand what so many endure in Iranian prisons.

He also wanted to run the London marathon, which he did with his son & daughter - he was dressed in the prison uniform he was able to smuggle out.

Now he is working on his third dream - to write a book which we can't wait to read.

It was moving, hearing about his interrogations, the cockroaches that were pervasive, the light always on, the screams of other prisoners. But it was also inspiring, seeing images of his garden which he rebuilt every time the prison guards tore it down, where prisoners could sit and talk. And the "Evin University" where fellow prisoners taught each other about their area of expertise.

Of course Anoosheh is now passionately campaigning for the people still in prison. You can take action too - [Protect British Nationals Arbitrarily detained abroad](#)

School Visits and Group Talks

We are very pleased to be able to offer school talks and talks to local groups. Do pass our details to anyone in the local area who you think might be interested, so we can tailor the talk to suit your group.

amnesty.reading@gmail.com

For all information about Amnesty UK's current focus, reports and responses to current issues, such as the upcoming general election, the Rwanda Bill and our call for a ceasefire in Gaza and Israel - please go to the [Amnesty International UK website](#).

Good News

Great news from Liechtenstein This is a significant victory for LGBTI rights in the country!



Death Penalty



Amnesty's annual report on the Death Penalty was published on 23rd May and is an important read. A worrying increase in total numbers but some good news in the fewer countries using the death penalty last year. Do take a read to find out all the details that will lead our campaigning in the future.

During the month, we put additional actions and information on our Twitter feed, Facebook page and website

- Twitter** - @AmnestyReading
- Facebook** - Search Amnesty Reading Town group
- Instagram** - Search amnestyreading
- Website** - including [each month's meeting minutes](#)

Our Prisoners of Conscience - Ahmed Mansoor and Dr Mohammed al-Roken from the UAE

Each local group works on behalf of prisoners that Amnesty has agreed are prisoners of conscience (PoCs). Our group has adopted **Ahmed and Mohammed** as our PoCs. We campaign for them regularly, sending messages of support to their loved ones as well as appeals for their immediate and unconditional release to the UAE authorities.

Please help by taking action and keeping up to date with the current issues facing their cases.

[Take action](#)



More information about Ahmed Mansoor

Ahmed is a loving husband and father, an engineer, a blogger and a poet. He is currently in solitary confinement for speaking out about human rights in the UAE.

[Read more](#)



More information about Dr Mohammed al-Roken - Mohammed is an Emirati lawyer, academic and human rights defender from Dubai. He was a member of the International Association of Lawyers (UIA) and the International Bar Association, and the president of the UAE's Jurists Association before its arbitrary dissolution by the authorities in 2011. Dr Al-Roken has authored books on human rights, constitutional law, and counterterrorism among other legal and political topics. He dedicated his career to providing legal assistance to victims of human rights violations in the UAE.

[Read more](#)

Upcoming Events

Other plans and dates for your diary

next month's dates in red

- WOMAD, Malmesbury - 26th-28th July**
- Reading Pride, Kings Meadow - 31st August
- Classical music concert, mulled wine and mince pies, Chantry House, Henley-on-Thames - Saturday 7th December

Protests, Vigils and Demonstrations

- Ceasefire Now demonstrations** - these demonstrations calling for a ceasefire in Gaza seem to be taking place most Saturdays in major cities, including London. Please see social media for details.

- Monthly Guantanamo Vigil**

NOW IS THE TIME TO FINALLY CLOSE GUANTÁNAMO!

Join AIUSA and co-sponsoring organizations for vigils to end the ongoing abuse of human rights by closing the detention center once and for all.

Wednesday June 5, 2024
July 3, 2024

RALLY LOCATIONS

Cobleskill, NY 4-5 PM ET
514 West New Street, Cobleskill, New York
Detroit, MI 4-5:30 PM ET
Michigan Federal Building, 417 Michigan Avenue, Contact: glgrosse@proton.com

London, UK, 1-3PM GMT
Parliament Square, opposite House of Parliament, London WC2R 2LR
Los Angeles, CA 12-1 PM PT
Los Angeles Federal Building, 300 N. Los Angeles, Contact: blowenst14@icloud.com

Mexico City, Mexico
Luzero 180, Central Mexico, 01 902 1700
Mississippi, MS 5-5 PM
Irish House Winery Bridge by the sculpture garden, Contact: sarabirch50@gmail.com

New York, NY 5-8 PM ET
Steps of the NY Public Library, 10 Ave 4 Ave 53 Contact: amnestyworldwide@gmail.com

San Francisco, CA 8pm PT
Harry Bridges Plaza (Intersection of Ferry Building, San Francisco, Contact: info@amnestyus.org)

Washington DC, Noon-1PM ET
In front of the White House on Pennsylvania Ave, Contact: Steve Lane, 571-221-4120

CO-SPONSORS

Amnesty International
Center for Constitutional Rights
Center for Victims of Torture
Close Guantanamo
Council on American-Soviet Relations
Interfaith Communities United for Justice and Peace
Muslim Counterpublics Lab
National Religious Campaign Against Torture
No More Guantanamo
NYC Veterans For Peace
Scholarship Prisoners
September 11 Survivors for Human Rights
UK Guantanamo Prisoners
Witness Against Torture
World Can't Wait

- Wednesday 5th June - monthly vigil outside Parliament Time:** 1pm – 3pm **Location:** Parliament Square **Activity/Purpose:** A two-hour static protest opposite Parliament holding photos of those still detained and placards. Engaging with passers-by, handing out leaflets with actions to take, and being a visual presence to those working in Parliament. **Please let your MP know you are taking part in the vigil and ask them to come over to see us while you are there.** If you are not attending you can still write to your MP and tell them about the vigil and ask them to show their support to the vigil. Please contact Sara Birch for details - 07710789616 - sarabirch50@hotmail.com

